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# **Governance and missionary effectiveness of the Company of Jesus: lessons from an extended theory of governance**

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## **Abstract**

From its very beginning, the governance of the Company of Jesus featured a certain number of specificities : vow of obedience to the pope, strong authority of the order's general, as well as the ignatian spirit which is transmitted through the spiritual exercises to all generations of jesuits. This article shows that the young Company's governance system played a decisive role for the order's missionary effectiveness. This is due, in great part, to its action as a cognitive and behavioral lever.

**Keywords:** Governance, cognitive lever; behavioral lever, jesuits

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<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to thank Bernard Hours and Gérard Charreaux for their comments and suggestions. The present article is a homage to Professor Gérard Charreaux, one of the most important contemporary French thinkers on organizational governance at the time of his retirement.

## Introduction

The Company of Jesus, also called the Jesuit Order, was born of a vow made at Montmartre in 1534 by Ignatius of Loyola and his companions, and was officially recognized with the promulgation of the Papal bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae* in 1540 in Rome by Pope Paul III. This bull contained the *formula instituti*, which was a first sketch of the order's structures, following the deliberations of the founding companions of 1539. The *Institute* thus prefigures the company's *Constitutions*, which was the central document framing the order's governance, and whose final written form was the result of an accumulation of several years' experience in concrete experimentation of missionary activity in the Ignatian spirit. Thus it was not a document which had been imagined in advance, but it was a description, carefully documented and prepared, about practices whose usefulness and effectiveness had been recognized and tried by Ignatius and his companions (Bertrand, 1974)<sup>2</sup>.

What fundamentally distinguishes Jesuit governance from those of other religious orders is the explicit vow of obedience to the Pope, as well as the very strong central

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<sup>2</sup> The Jesuit Father Dominique Bertrand retraces, in a meticulous work (see especially Chapter 2), the genesis and structure of this important document, which had at least three different versions and which stabilized in 1558, about two years after the death of Ignatius and nearly two decades after the foundation of the order. By that time, the Company was already present with Provinces in India and Brazil, among other places. It is also to be noted that Jesuits were at the origin of the foundation of the city of Sao Paulo.

authority exercised by the Superior General, who is elected for life. Moreover, the principle of obedience revolves around a spirituality focusing on each individual's progress in a personal approach of the divine mysteries and the work of discernment as faced with choices to be made by each one in his present walk of life. Jesuit governance thus combines a strong governance marked by obedience to the central authority of the Church and the different hierarchical echelons of the order (Superior General, Provincials, Superiors of Houses, Colleges, and Universities) with a great inner freedom, each one working, "for the greater glory of God"<sup>3</sup>.

In the midst of a rapidly-changing world, at the dawn of modernity (16<sup>th</sup> Century), the Company of Jesus quickly proved to have a formidable effectiveness in its apostolic and missionary activity, as witnessed by its rapid expansion throughout the world (India, China, Japan, and Latin America) (Hours, 2012), as well as the success of its schools and other institutions for formation, to the point of having a quasi-monopoly over colleges in Catholic Europe at the time (Calvez, 2001, p. 208). When the constitutions were approved in 1558, the order was already a globalized organization, with missions in East Asia and Latin America. Very quickly, and in addition to his spiritual role, the Superior General thus became the director of a truly "multinational" enterprise. The study of the genesis of its constitutions leads us to believe that the Company's system of governance, as experienced during its first two decades, formed a fundamental base of

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<sup>3</sup> *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* is in fact the Company's motto.

support for its rapid global expansion as well as for the management of this international missionary opus.

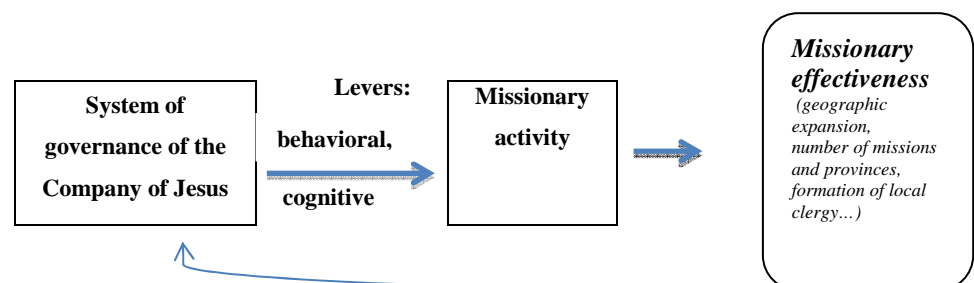
The example given by the apostolic and missionary effectiveness as displayed by the Company of Jesus therefore interests management studies, and most especially research on governance. The latter in fact searches for possible explanations for the effectiveness of governance mechanisms in realizing organizational goals. However, the dominant approach of governance research deals mostly with big listed corporations and tries to measure their effectiveness through a measure of their impact on the creation of shareholder value. Due to this fact, this field is not suited to studying the impact of the governance of non-profit organizations, such as religious orders, on the accomplishment of their mission. Recently, researchers in economics and management have started to explore the governance of religious orders (Inauen and Frey, 2008; Inauen *et al.*, 2009; Rost *et al.*, 2010; Wirtz *et al.*, 2012). Notably, Wirtz *et al.* (2012, 2013) studied the impact of the Dominican order's governance on the apostolic activity proper to it<sup>4</sup>, and consider that in order to find answers to this kind of investigation, it is necessary to adopt an extended conceptual framework of governance, such as that proposed by Charreaux (2008).

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4 The Dominicans share with the Jesuits an intense intellectual productivity, as well as an apostolic mission. Yet, the governance systems of the two orders are radically different. In fact, Dominican governance is characterized by a very pronounced democratic functioning, and contrarily to the Jesuits, Dominican brothers spend a lot of time in regular and formalized deliberation processes, and this at every level (convent, province, order) (Wirtz *et al.*, 2013).

Two central aspects in Charreaux's work allow for an understanding of the logic and effectiveness in the governance of organizations as complex and specific as the religious orders, which are non-profit, but which have particular ends: the analysis of governance in a systemic approach, as well as an analysis of its mode of action according to three types of lever (disciplinary, mental or cognitive, and behavioral). For the Company of Jesus and its missionary action, we may believe that mental or cognitive levers (Ignatian spirituality, especially in what it means for discernment and intellectual formation) and behavioral levers (the principle of obedience as a means for resolving uncertainty) have historically played an especially important role (it is the central hypothesis of this article, as represented in Figure 1). The article aims at expanding upon this intuition. To do this, we shall firstly (1) summarize the expanded model of governance as proposed by Charreaux (2008) which will serve as our interpretive framework. Then (2), we shall describe the specificities of the Company of Jesus' governance system, before analyzing (3) the levers of its effectiveness.

**Figure 1.** Jesuit governance and effectiveness of the international expansion of its mission



### **Which interpretive framework should be used to analyze jesuit governance?**

In Management Science, the dominant approach towards analyzing systems of governance is strongly marked by agency theory (see Daily *et al.*, 2003), which focuses the analysis on the management of conflicts of interest (so called “agency conflicts”) and measures the effectiveness of governance systems in their capacity to minimize agency costs and thus guarantee an appropriate return on investment for financial investors (Shleifer and Vishny, 1997). Most empirical studies carried out according to this approach study listed companies and often focus on particular governance mechanisms (i.e. the board of directors) studied in an isolated fashion, rather than approaching the governance system as a complex and dynamic whole.

For a study of the levers of effectiveness in the governance of a religious order such as the Company of Jesus, this dominant approach towards governance seems unsuitable for at least three reasons. First of all, the goal of the Company such as it is stated in its motto (*ad maiorem Dei gloriam*<sup>5</sup>), and in the light of which its effectiveness should be judged, does not translate into a return on financial investment<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Concretely, work for “the greater glory of God” is done by an intense apostolic and missionary activity throughout the world.

<sup>6</sup> Especially given that the companions take a vow of poverty.

Secondly, agency theory analyzes the economic efficiency of governance systems only in terms of savings on agency costs, whose lever is essentially of a disciplinary nature. That is to say that agency costs are minimized thanks to a set of incentive and control mechanisms whose principal role would be to minimize costs linked to agency conflicts among different stakeholders. Such a purely disciplinary approach to governance systems implicitly assumes that an enterprise's set of "value-creating" projects already exists such as could be found in a restaurant's menu (Wirtz, 2005). Said otherwise, (good and bad) projects represent a closed whole. However, such a purely disciplinary approach towards governance assumes the existence of a world closed to possibilities, which is in contradiction with the world contemporary to Ignatius of Loyola which witnessed an opening (at once intellectual and geographical) without precedent. The theological corollary to this opening is the idea of *magis* (more), so dear to the Jesuits, who always sought to further advance the glory of God, be it by novel means. This implies that, in the Ignatian world, marked as it was by sometimes radical discoveries and innovations, all possibilities were open<sup>7</sup> and able to move forwards thanks to the intelligent work of discernment by one and many. As soon as it is admitted that the scale of measurement for organizational effectiveness is the *magis*, this effectiveness cannot be assessed by a simple *economy* of agency costs, but must include the vectors of an authentic *creation* of value (spiritual in the case of a religious order). Working on the

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7 It is even potentially unlimited, which creates a problem of indeterminacy of choice, where the specific system of governance can be an effective remedy, as we shall demonstrate further down.



levers of an authentic *creation* in an open and uncertain world, beyond a simple *economy* therefore requires an extension of the analysis of governance to include cognitive and behavioral dimensions (Charreaux and Wirtz, 2006)<sup>8</sup>.

Thirdly, the Company of Jesus was meant to form an organic whole, a true “body”, whose Superior General was the “head” (see especially the 9<sup>th</sup> Part of the *Constitutions*, and more especially n° 719). However, as indicated above, many studies taking the dominant approach towards governance analyze certain mechanisms in a relatively isolated fashion. If the community of Jesuits really lives as an organic body, a systemic approach towards governance should thus be used, one in which the different actors and mechanisms of the system interact in a complex and dynamic way.

Charreaux (1994) proposes such a systemic approach. In fact, he defines the governance *system* of an organization in a broader fashion as, “the set of mechanisms which have as an effect to delimit the powers and influence the decisions of top managers, in other words, ‘governing’ their conduct and defining their discretionary space.” (p. 421-422). Thus, according to Charreaux, the governance of an organization

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8 The fact of extending the analysis to include a cognitive and behavioral dimension does not in any way imply that the disciplinary dimension is absent from Jesuit governance. The Company always maintained numerous and complex relationships with ecclesial and temporal power, and there were frequent conflicts between the Papacy and the Jesuits over the course of history. The experiment of “reductions” for example, allowing native villages in Paraguay to live in autarchy, clashed with the economic interests of colonial powers, who finally obtained the expulsion of the Jesuits.

is a system, made up of various mechanisms, which interact with the top executive and which give him a more-or-less sizeable discretionary space. The governance system and the manager's discretionary space are thus two sides of the same coin, namely the organization of authority at the highest level of an organization. Let us note that, given the vow of obedience and his election for life, the discretionary space of the Superior General of the Company is potentially very large. We shall revisit that point.

Different governance mechanisms can *a priori* be classified according to two criteria (Charreaux, 1997, p. 427), namely their degree of intentionality (the way a mechanism functions can be intentional, such as in the case of legislation and law, or spontaneous, such as in the case of cultural values), and their degree of specificity in relation to the organization (thus the general assembly of a public corporation is specific to itself, but the corporate law of a country is a non-specific mechanism). The intersection of these two criteria allows Charreaux to propose a typology, which is useful for describing the composition and characteristics of the governance system of a concrete organization, and which is proper to it. We have attempted to describe the configuration of the Jesuit system of governance in the second section of this article (table 1). Charreaux's typology, beyond allowing for an orderly classification of a list of mechanisms for a given organization, emphasizes the fundamentally systemic nature of governance, for it highlights: (1) the multiplicity of mechanisms susceptible of interacting with one

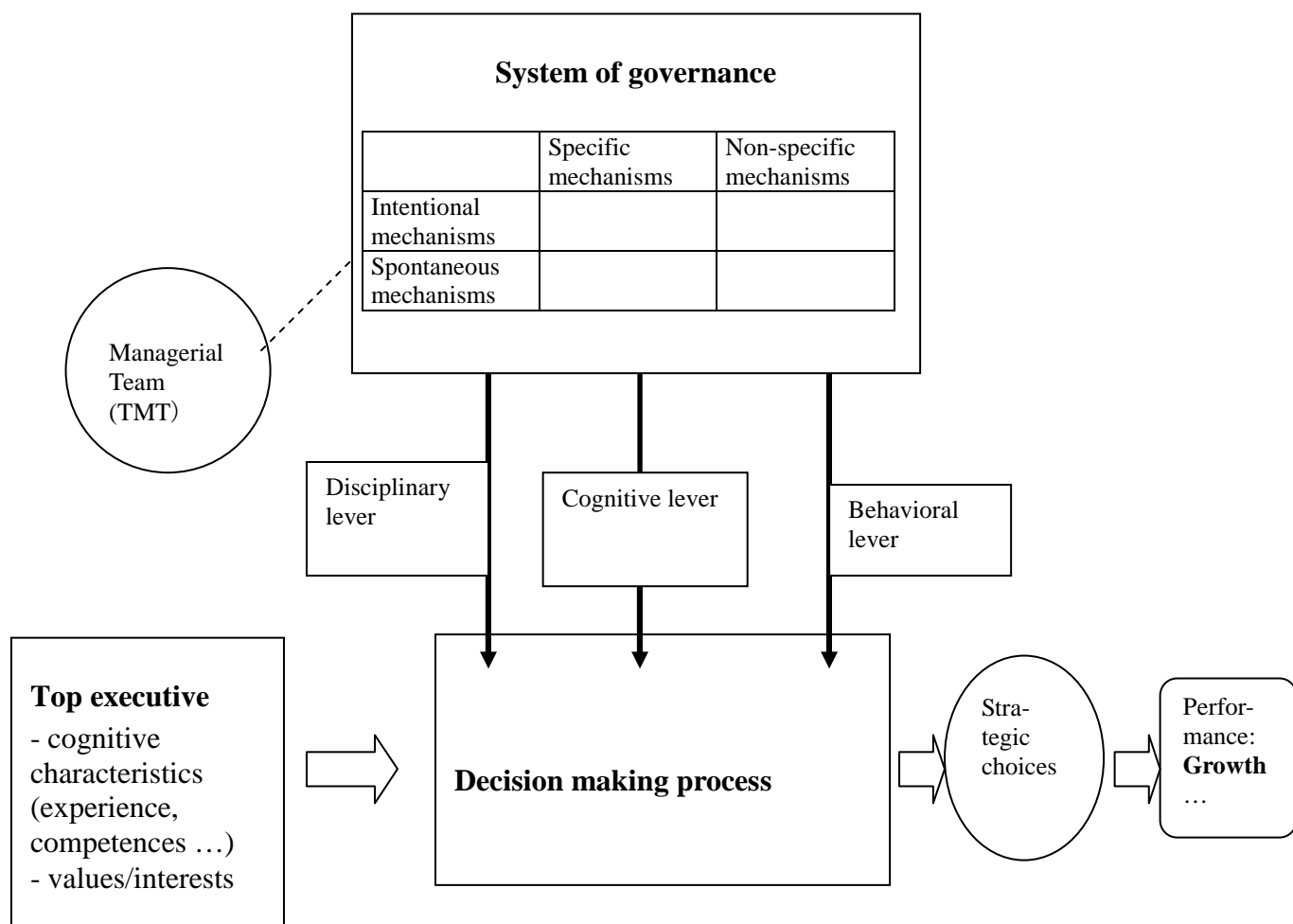
another in a dynamic way; (2) their different possible modes of functioning, with the dynamic effects potentially induced by and for the system<sup>9</sup>, as well as; (3) the social nesting of any system of governance, even the most specific, in cultural, political, economic, and social logics<sup>10</sup>, which are not specific to the system of governance, but with which it interacts in a constant manner.

Beyond its representation as a complex and dynamic system, Charreaux (2008) proposes a model of governance, which is extended to include the cognitive and behavioral dimensions. Thus he goes further than agency theory does, for it only sees in governance a simple disciplinary lever. However the, “mechanisms governing top managers’ conduct,” are equally susceptible of acting like cognitive levers in the construction of future projects as well as acting like behavioral levers, allowing for the solving of problems faced in situations where standard rationality is inoperative.

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9 Spontaneous mechanisms, notably, through their indeterminate nature, are susceptible *a priori* to causing new things to emerge (and potentially supporting the *magis*, if we wish to link it with the Jesuit mission’s problematic.) Ignatian spirituality, which puts a strong emphasis on the personal discernment of each person, sets the example.

10 The Company of Jesus was born in a particular socio-cultural environment and Ignatius, its first Superior General, interacted in a regular way with different authorities and political, cultural, and spiritual institutions of his era, to which his very rich correspondence attests (see Bernard, 1985).



**Figure 2.** Charreaux's extended model of governance (2008, p. 1861)

Conceptual frameworks other than merely agency theory recognize the ability of certain mechanisms of governance to act like cognitive and behavioral levers. In fact, it has already been explained that agency theory especially analyzes the functioning of governance mechanisms as a disciplinary lever, in the sense of supervising the top executive (ratification of his choices and supervision of their execution), to assure that he is acting in the best interest of the organization's stakeholders. It would therefore only be about minimizing possible conflicts of interest between the top manager and the other stakeholders through the ratification of choices and the supervision of their execution (Fama and Jensen, 1983). The initiation of strategic projects and their implementation would thus be the top manager's exclusive responsibility, the governance system merely playing the role of a control mechanism. Such an approach ignores the genesis of strategic projects and the fact that, in the reality of certain organizations, governance mechanisms are susceptible of offering support to the top executive in the very conception of his strategic projects. It is moreover the case for the Company of Jesus, to the extent that the vow of obedience made to the Sovereign Pontiff for example, confides to the latter the choice of destinations for missions. However, if the system of governance provides support to the top manager in the formulation (the initiation) of strategic projects, that is to say in their very conception, it functions as a truly cognitive and behavioral lever. This means that it potentially helps the director to better reflect upon, and put into practice his strategy by improving it

through a better understanding of the possibilities. To understand the action of governance as a cognitive lever, reference can be made to resource-based theory (Penrose, 1959; Wenerfeld, 1984). It allows for an understanding of the dynamics present in the construction of the cognitive resources of an organization and the interaction of their construction with strategic development. For its part, the behavioral lever makes reference to another theoretical field, partially intersecting the reflections on the cognitive approach, but which puts an accent on a certain number of psychological and behavioral biases which have been identified by studies of individuals placed in decision-making situations (i.e. Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). This literature shows, for example, that individuals naturally have a tendency to turn towards simple heuristics when placed before complex decisions. These are mental shortcuts, used to make a decision. Heuristics are thus a means for individuals whose rationality is limited, even procedural, to face a complex world. Their limited rationality means that they do not have complete knowledge of the parameters allowing them to make an optimal decision (Simon, 1982).

### **The system of governance of the Company of Jesus**

This section has the goal of representing the major features of the Company of Jesus' governance system, such as it emerged during the first decades of the order. This

representation (table 1) is mainly based on two documents: The Constitutions of the Company in their official version (dating to said version B approved in 1558), and whose French version is found on the internet site of the *Province de France*; and Father Dominique Bertrand's work<sup>11</sup>, who published a very fine study of the genesis and structure of the Constitutions in 1974, as well as the spirit animating them.

Let us note beforehand that according to Father Bertrand, the spirit of St Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises is also fundamentally the same spirit animating the Constitutions of the Company, which by definition possess a social dimension, whereas the Exercises concern a mostly personal experience. The relation between the individual and the social dimensions of ignatian spirituality is thus complex but very real, for all of those who, through a long process of incorporation as prescribed by the Constitutions and including several important steps (general exam, noviciate, studies...), become companions do the Exercises. Since they are an integrative part of the Jesuit socialization process, the Exercises can equally be considered a governance mechanism<sup>12</sup>. To characterize it in a few words, let us say that the Ignatian spirit combines a sustained and progressive exercise in personal discernment with a spirit of obedience. The Ignatian spirit was born between a certain tension among a very direct,

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11 Dominique Bertrand is a Jesuit Father and holder of a State Doctorate. His thesis was a very methodical analysis of the vast Ignatian body of correspondence (see Bertrand, 1985).

12 In fact, the cognitive approach considers educational systems as cognitive governance mechanisms. We thank Gerard Charreaux for this remark.

personal approach to the Divine mysteries and an obedient submission to legitimate authority (Pope, Superior General). “This tension no doubt characterizes that which Ignatian spirituality authorizes: believing in the immediacy of the experience of God, and in the fruitfulness of long meditations to inscribe it into society and history.” (See, “*Petite Introduction à la Spiritualité Ignatienne.*”, <http://www.jesuites.com/spiritualite/intro04.htm> )

	<b>Specific mechanisms</b>	<b>Non-specific mechanisms</b>
<b>Intentional mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Institute</li> <li>- Constitutions of the Company</li> <li>- General Congregations (“To the authority of the Superior General over the Company is counterposed the authority of the Company over the Superior General”, Bertrand (1974), p. 76)</li> <li>- Vows (obedience to the Pope, to the Superior General)</li> <li>- Process of incorporation (education/socialisation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Canon Law (Papal Bulls...)</li> <li>- State (in France, the relationship between the monarchy and the Order have sometimes been conflictual)</li> </ul>
<b>Spontaneous mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ignatian spirit/spirituality (Spiritual Exercises)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultures of the missionary lands</li> <li>- Ambient intellectual environment</li> <li>- Competition among religious congregations<sup>13</sup></li> </ul>

**Table 1.** The Company of Jesus’ system of governance

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13 The Chinese Jesuit Rite was forbidden following proceedings by other Orders who had maintained the traditional Latin Rite in their missionary activity (see below).



The different concrete governance mechanisms (institute, constitutions of the company, general congregations, vows, Ignatian spirituality, process of incorporation, Canon Law...) together and in their interaction with each other define the discretionary space of the Superior General, who directs the Company. This discretionary space is intentionally very large. The Constitutions render the principle and reasons explicit in these terms: “Since experience, the practice of government, the knowledge of each in particular, and the authority exercised over all are of great value to perform this duty, the General should be elected for life and not for a determined time. To the other benefits shall also be added this one: the Company will have less to suffer from the difficulty and time spent in General Congregations, being nearly always fairly busy with matters of great importance for the glory of God.” (719) And further on: “The authority of the Superior will be greater if he cannot be changed than if he had been elected for one or several years, *vis-à-vis* people from the outside, because he will be better known by all, and for the same reason, *vis-à-vis* those of the Company. To the contrary, the fact of knowing that he will leave his role one day, and will be equal or inferior to others, and also the fact that he will have little experience in the role could diminish his authority.” (721). The great authority of the Superior General, starting with his large discretionary space, is thus anchored in the constitutions, but already the principle dates back to the deliberations of the first companions in 1539, who then decided to institutionalize a vow of obedience to one among them.

Beyond non-specific limitations, such as those imposed by Canon Law, and relating to the general political and regulatory environment, the Superior General's discretionary space, however, knew two specific and important limitations. The first is that of obedience to the Pope which is institutionalized in a very explicit vow (specific to the Jesuits). We shall see later on that it was instituted to play an important role as a behavioral lever, at the service of the Order's missionary service.

The second important limitation is the authority of the whole community in answer to that of its Superior General. This authority of the community hinges on the congregations (provincial and general)<sup>14</sup>. In fact, the constitutions describe a profoundly dynamic conception of the relationships between actors in the governance system (and more especially between the “body” and the “head” of the company): “Part IX (of the Constitutions) (...) is (...) shared equally. Three chapters concern the general Father and his relationships with the Company, and three other chapters, the relationships of the Company towards the general Father. (...) All (in Part VIII and IX of the Constitution) is always organized in a way to move constantly between one pole and the other; the union of hearts embracing all game-plays in the representation of the whole during

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14 Let us note that, contrary to other Orders who hold chapters at regular intervals, the Jesuits did not wish such a regularity, General Congregations being called in only two cases: for the election of a Superior General, and for important matters concerning the Company.

provincial and general congregations (Chapter 1 versus Chapters 2 to 7 in Part VIII). Congregations for their part interact with the general Father in an unceasing back-and-forth where the initiative moves from one (Chapter 2,3,6) to the other (4,5,7). The 3x3 plan in Part IX expresses this same game admirably. Thus, and this is the most important point, a certain richness of concrete relationships is linked to the solidity of the two poles among which they are tied.” (Bertrand, 1974, p. 188). That it is the community which circumscribes the discretionary space, large as it is, of the Superior General through the governance mechanism of the congregation is clearly expressed in the following quote: “...the community (finding its expression through the means of congregations) is the supreme body, which the companions scattered throughout the universe have found the strength to represent by delegates. It absolutely precedes the Superior General, when it concerns his election (...); it accompanies him as an equal towards an equal, when it concerns important questions other than the election (Chapter 7 of Part VIII of the Constitutions).” (Bertrand, 1974, p. 190).

This way of organizing the field of interaction among actors in the governance system, where the very strong authority of the Superior General interacts with an equally strong authority from the community (Bertrand speaks of “the solidity of two poles”), acts as a real mental lever in the Order at the service of the *magis*, as we shall see further on. Thus, faced with a strong top executive, an equally strong system of governance is

susceptible of acquiring an enabling force. “Governing the conduct” of a top manager (in reference to Charreaux’s definition, 1997) is thus not necessarily a restriction in the director’s latitude over an organization, but is potentially a source of support.

## **Cognitive and behavioral governance at the service of the mission**

After the preceding brief presentation of the pillars of Jesuit governance, let us now see according to which modalities the principal governance mechanisms influenced the missionary and apostolic success of the young Company. We shall see, in this context, that they above all acted as behavioral and cognitive levers to rapidly spread the Company's missionary activity across the world and assure its success.

Obedience to the Pope is a governance mechanism which, in the emerging Company, acted as a behavioral lever. In fact, obedience to the Roman Pontiff, far from being motivated by an irenic representation of his role, in fact acted as a heuristic technique for solving problems of indeterminacy in making choices in a world whose frontiers were expanding and which would thus become only more complex. Obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff supplied an external answer to the question of “where” the apostolic mission should be carried out. In their seventh part, the Constitutions of the Company affirm this fact, recalling the deliberations of 1539: “The intention of the forth vow made to the Sovereign Pontiff was not aiming at any place in particular, but that those making this vow be spread over different parts of the world. In fact, those who first came together in this Company came from many different provinces and kingdoms, and it did not seem clear to them to which country of faithful or infidels they should go. In

order not to err along the way of the Lord, they made this promise or this vow so that the Sovereign Pontiff spread them out for the greater glory of God and accordingly to their intention to travel the world, and so that, if they did not find the desired spiritual fruit in one place, they could go from one to another, seeking the greater glory of God and greater support for souls.” (n° 605)

The following commentary by Bertrand (1974, p. 139) presents the behavioral role of these vows of obedience to the Pope very well, acting as a heuristic device allowing for the solving of the dilemma of decision-making in an indeterminate framework. “The first most important thing for the first companions was the search for an ‘other’ variable to free them from the indetermination in which the very composition of their group placed them. More and more, so that their universal desire for service could take flesh without disappearing, they needed this voice of authority external to the group, even if it was criticized at the time by many, namely the voice of the Pope. The originality of the process, which was in a way scandalously prosaic, was a process of faith and, *was to take the Pope as a means* ‘to better succeed’. Thinking that the Pope could be useful was a fundamentally realistic principle from which the Company was born. Some may be scandalized that the Holy Father could thus be reduced to a means and that such a reduction could be attributed to Saint Ignatius. The texts are there. Moreover, those who would be scandalized would no doubt have reflected less than Ignatius did on the

definition of a means. Finally who, below the *servus servorum Dei*, could be scandalized to serve something, I mean to say, to serve men who unconditionally trust him, not for him, but for the single end which is one: the greater glory of God and the more universal salvation of souls?”

Once the companions were spread across the world, Jesuit spirituality and education acted as cognitive levers for the accomplishment of the apostolic mission. This spirituality allowed the necessary inner freedom to imagine the precise means for an effective mission according to the very particular and ever changing circumstances in which the companions sent on mission found themselves. Obedient submission to the Pope concerning the place they were sent to moreover had the effect of concentrating the companion’s cognitive resources solely on the accomplishment of the mission in the precise place where they had been placed. Historically, the rapid successes of the missions were for a large part attributable to inculturation, which proceeded precisely from the Ignatian spirit and which encouraged the best ways of announcing the Gospel to be found, according to the particular context and circumstances. “In China and India, (...) the Jesuits defined a new approach to missions prefiguring that which we have since called ‘inculturation’. It advocated a mastery of local languages and a deep knowledge of cultures, the development of a Christian body of literature in these

languages, the adoption of local customs and rites compatible with Christianity, and the formation of a local clergy.” (Hours, 2012, p. 113)

This missionary approach by the Jesuits in fact proved to be particularly effective, to the point that a “new missiology” was gradually adopted as the dominant approach from the 19<sup>th</sup> century on, borrowed from the founding intuition of the Jesuits (see Hours, 2012, p. 119-121). The development of a “*new approach* to missions” represented a real act of cognitive creation (in the sense of the generation of new knowledge and skills), and it is likely that a specifically Ignatian spirituality was an important lever for making this creation possible.

Let us note at this point that, later on (in 1645), Canon Law acted, not as a cognitive lever, but as a means to impose a strict discipline by forbidding the Chinese Rite as developed by the Jesuits. In fact, the Propaganda and the Holy Office proclaimed their condemnation of the Chinese Rite after the affair was carried before the Holy See by the Dominicans, who did not work according to the same methods. Thereafter, it is probable that missionary activity lost its effectiveness, just as the new missiology eventually returned to the inculturation principle for missions during the second, very strong missionary wave of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Hours, 2012, p. 120).



One of the important pillars of Jesuit governance, as described previously, is the community's authority, as expressed through general congregations. It faces the equally strong authority of the Superior General in a game of dynamic interaction. The interaction between these two "strong poles" of governance that are the "head" and "body" of the Company act as a cognitive lever for initiatives at the scale of the Order. Thus, Bertrand (1974, p. 190) can declare, "it is clear that the community seems like a possible place of ferment for initiatives, worries, and projects (...). It is a happy ferment where the spirit of the Company awakens. Saint Ignatius, less through a gift of prophecy than through a true knowledge of man, was certain that this ferment would occur." Yet all the energy of this "ferment" must not be dispersed, which explains the rare holdings of general congregations comparatively to other Orders. Once the great projects and the man leading them are determined (during the Superior's election), each one need only concentrate on his mission, whence he has been sent, and to place all his energy there, *ad maiorem Dei gloriam.*"

## Conclusion

The Jesuit Order was born more than four centuries ago. It experienced rapid growth, meeting with important missionary and apostolic successes very early on in a rapidly expanding world. The Company of Jesus' system of governance was characterized from its beginnings by a certain number of features, including the vow of obedience to the Pope, the Superior General's great authority, as well as the Ignatian spirit which is transmitted through the Spiritual Exercises to every generation of Jesuits. In the present article, we have demonstrated that the particular system of governance of the young Company played a decisive role in the missionary effectiveness of the Order, especially thanks to its action as a cognitive and behavioural lever. In an extension of this study, from the point of view of studies on governance systems, it would be interesting to develop a comparison with other religious orders, as well as studying issues of competition among them<sup>15</sup>. More generally speaking, given their long-time survival over the centuries, the study of the governance systems of religious orders, by comparison, may allow for important insights into the requirements of effective governance of modern organizations. Such a comparative analysis is yet to be developed.

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